



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Labor Cabinet

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**Steven L. Beshear, Governor**

**Larry L. Roberts, Secretary**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Cintas Ashland Distribution Center Earns VPP Star Status, Highest Safety Honor in Kentucky**

*Company's achievement is first this year in the Commonwealth*

**ASHLAND, Ky. (May 14, 2014)** – Kentucky Labor Cabinet Secretary Larry Roberts joined local and company officials today at the Cintas Ashland Distribution Center to present a plaque and flag signifying the company's Star status under the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). The VPP Star status is Kentucky's highest level of certification in recognition of employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health.

"The people of the Cintas Ashland Distribution Center have worked very hard for this honor, and should be extremely proud of this accomplishment," said Secretary Roberts. "This represents a culture of safety and health that starts from the top and runs throughout the entire organization."

Headquartered in Cincinnati, Cintas Corp. (Nasdaq: CTAS) provides highly specialized services to businesses of all types primarily throughout North America. Cintas designs, manufactures and implements corporate identity uniform programs, and provides entrance mats, restroom supplies, first aid, safety, fire protection products and services and document management services for more than 1 million businesses.

Cintas Corp. operates approximately 430 facilities in the U.S. and Canada, including six manufacturing plants and nine distribution centers that employ approximately 30,000 people. The Ashland facility has 175 employees and handles corporate identity uniform programs.

“The VPP safety management initiative is one that has proven to be extremely effective with our employee-partners, and one that we would like to share with the youth of our community as they begin to look at potential employers in the local workforce,” said Leigh Wallen, general manager of the Ashland Distribution Center. “High school students from surrounding school districts have been invited to attend today’s event as a means to educate the young talent of Ashland’s future workforce about the importance of workplace safety and how it can help them select an employer who is committed to employee safety.”

Only 11 other active work sites in Kentucky maintain the VPP status within the Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Program (KY OSH). The Cintas Ashland Distribution Center is the only facility in the Commonwealth to earn the honor this year.

Companies that achieve VPP status must go through an in-depth work site evaluation, including a hazard analysis and a detailed records review. The process involves an audit that requires multiple interactions with KY OSH. Employees also must be engaged in the process – through safety and prevention programs and training.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Program (OSHA) formally announced VPP and approved the first site in 1982. Because Kentucky operates under its own state plan, the VPP status in the Commonwealth is even more stringent than the federal requirements. Each VPP Star company in Kentucky must have safety programs in place regarding ergonomics, wellness, active shooter response and other plans involving best safety practices that go above the national requirements.

Statistical evidence for VPP’s success is impressive. The average VPP worksite has a Days Away Restricted or Transferred (DART) case rate of 52 percent below the average for its industry. Fewer injuries and illnesses mean greater profits as workers’ compensation and insurance premiums go down.

The VPP status falls in line with Gov. Steve Beshear’s efforts to improve the health of all Kentuckians. The Governor launched [kyhealthnow](#) in February as an aggressive and wide-ranging initiative significantly to reduce incidents and deaths from Kentucky’s dismal health rankings and habits. It builds on Kentucky’s successful implementation of health care reform and uses multiple strategies over the next several years to improve the state’s collective health.

For more on the KY OSH program, click [here](#). For a list of all active VPP sites, click [here](#).

For details on Cintas, visit [www.cintas.com](http://www.cintas.com).

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*The Kentucky Labor Cabinet's primary responsibility is to ensure that divisions and offices falling under the auspices of the Cabinet work within the jurisdiction of Kentucky labor law to ensure equitable and fair treatment of the Commonwealth's more than 1.9 million wage-earning employees. The Cabinet, according to regulation, has the duties, responsibilities, power, and authority relating to labor, wage and hour issues, occupational safety and health of employees, child labor, apprenticeship, workers' compensation insurance, and all other matters under the jurisdiction of the Labor Cabinet. For more information, visit [www.labor.ky.gov](http://www.labor.ky.gov).*

